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FROM

Rev. William R. Alger

Parker

A

SKETCH OF THE ARBITRARY PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

BAPTIST CHURCH,

In Ludlow, Vt.

RELATIVE TO THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF

ZECHARIAH PARKER, Jun.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

BRIEF REMARKS

On Baptism and Close Communion.

BY ZECHARIAH PARKER, JUN.

"Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed" to the "commandments of men that turn from the truth."
TIT. I. 13, 14.

KEENE, N. H.
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.
1832.

45 12456.3



PREFACE.

1852, May 28 *last*

Rev. Mr. Hurlbut, of Centenary

If, in this little work, I have advanced a sentiment in any way calculated to wound the cause of the Redeemer, or injure the religious feeling of the conscientious Baptist professor, it is unintentional. My wish is, to explain my own views—give a fair and simple statement of the treatment I have received, and leave it to others to judge of the principles which have actuated the parties.

I write only of things which have occurred in one particular branch of the Baptist Church, fully believing that the errors of the Baptist Church in Ludlow, by no means obscures the devotion, or invalidates the belief of those who wish, without investigation, to follow a creed which I believe inconsistent with the word of God.

Let it be remembered, too, that I write to defend myself only, against the long continued abuse and ill treatment of the Baptist minister,* and some few of his people in this place. There are many in this Church, who have long held a place in my affections, and whom I esteem as the disciples of Jesus.

The circumstances in which the Church has been placed for the last ten or twelve years, by some of its pastors, I doubt not, have paved the way for discord and oppression. The imprudent zeal, the crime, and dreadful end of RUEL LOTHROP, and the unfortunate removal of Elder SAVERY, I believe, lowered the standard of practical piety, and opened the door for the reception of the present pastor, who appears the least calculated to heal the disease of the little flock, and against whose uncharitable conduct, I am thus obliged to defend myself.

The facts I have adduced, are well substantiated, nor would I have thus publicly laid them before the world but with a view to disperse the clouds which have been thrown around my own conduct, and the minds of my brethren, townsmen and friends.

I would remark, that the notes to this work are from a friend to religious liberty.

Z. P.

* The Rev. Elias Hurlbut.

CHURCH PROCEEDINGS, &c.



IN the Summer of 1831, a committee appointed by the Baptist Church in Ludlow, called on Mr James Coleman, then a member of said Church ; they preferred no charges against him whatever, but on taking leave of him, said, "We have found you *much better* than we expected, and have had a happy visit." Notwithstanding this *happy visit*, Mr Coleman was soon after excommunicated on the report of this committee. Not approving of these arbitrary proceedings of the Church, and not assenting to Elder Hurlbut's system of limited charity,* I addressed the following letter to the Church :—

LUDLOW, September 17, 1831.

To the Baptist Church in Ludlow.

BRETHREN,—As I have changed my sentiments with regard to close communion, and as I consider the measures adopted in the excommunication of brother James Coleman, as arbitrary and unchristian, I take this opportunity to state my views to the Church, and to inform it that I do now separate myself from it.

I consider that we have no warrant from the example of Christ, nor from the Bible, to exclude ourselves from the celebration of the Lord's Supper with other acknowledged christian denominations, nor to exclude them from our communion. I consider that we have no authority from the Bible for close communion, and consequently, that all Christians ought to meet on an equality at the Lord's table, as they do hope to meet in the kingdom of Heaven. Believing that my brethren do not walk according to the gospel rule, I am thus compelled to separate myself from them.

ZECHARIAH PARKER, Jun.

* Elder Hurlbut, an expelled Mason, seems to be of opinion, that all pure and undefiled religion ought to be amalgamated with Antimasonry. It appears that Mr Coleman was excommunicated for the unpardonable sin of being a Mason, but Mr I. a member of the same Church, was only suspended for about one year for the same sin. The decision of the Church in these two cases appears to be as follows :—Mr Coleman *cannot* be a Mason and a Christian, but Mr I. *can* be a Mason and a Christian. This decision is warranted only by the opinion of a quack physician, who administered cabbage to a tailor and shoemaker, who were afflicted with the same disease. The tailor recovered, but the shoemaker died. For the benefit of quacks in general, he made the following entry in his journal, viz.—"Cabbage will cure all tailors, but kill all shoemakers."

On the evening of the 19th of January last, I received a visit from a committee of the Church. The substance of our conversation at this time, is contained in the following certificate :

We, the undersigned, hereby certify, that on the evening of the 19th January, 1832, a committee appointed by the Baptist Church in Ludlow, consisting of Dea. Wilcox, Ephraim Warren, senior, and Solomon Haven, came to the house of Zechariah Parker, Jun., and took up a labor with him in behalf of said Church. They brought the following charges against him, viz.

1. For leaving the Church on account of close communion.
2. For accusing the Church of arbitrary and unchristian conduct in the excommunication of Mr James Coleman.

Mr Parker then asked one of the committee, if he believed that water baptism was the only door into the visible Church, he answered, "yes, after a person has been converted." Mr P. denied that water baptism was the only door into the visible Church, and challenged him to prove it was, by scripture.

Mr P. then asked the committee, if they would commune with Christians, who did not belong to the Baptist Church. They said they *would not*.

Mr P. said, "Why will you separate yourselves from the children of God? There is no scriptural proof that the twelve Apostles were ever baptized with water, yet they partook of the passover with Christ, and this," said he, "is what makes me an open communionist." He then added, "If you will prove that the Apostles were baptized with water, I will humbly confess myself in error, and return to the Church." He very earnestly requested the committee to prove the doctrine of the Church in relation to communion; but they did not even pretend to offer any proof whatever.

With regard to the *second* charge against Mr P. he contended, that the labor with, and expulsion of Mr Coleman, was arbitrary and unchristian, because the Church did not proceed according to the directions given by Christ in relation to Church government, viz. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone: if he shall hear thee, then hast thou gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."—Matt. xviii. 15, 16, 17. After repeating these words of Christ, he stated that the committee appointed to confer with Mr Coleman, brought no charges against him, but said, that they had found him much better than they expected, and had had a happy visit. This statement, he proved by pro-

ducing a certificate signed by Mr and Mrs Coleman. He then requested the committee to prove that the proceedings of the Church, in the excommunication of Mr Coleman, were warranted by scripture. Mr Warren replied, "If a brother sins openly, rebuke him before all." Mr P. denied that this was scripture, but Mr Warren affirmed it was.*

Mr Haven then accused Mr Parker of using the most profane language at Rockingham, in the hearing of Mr Robertson and Mr Clark—said that Mr Robertson informed him of it, and requested him to inquire of Mr Clark, who, he said, would confirm his statement. He said that he had made inquiry of Mr Clark, who said, he never heard Mr Parker swear. The committee then said, that they were fully satisfied that Mr P. did not swear, as alledged by Mr Haven.

As some of this committee have reported, that Mr Parker talked so loud and fast that they had no opportunity to say much to him, therefore, we, the undersigned, say, that Mr Parker gave them a fair opportunity to talk, answered their questions without reserve, and treated them with due respect.

STEPHEN SPAULDING,
HEARTWELL WOOD,
JAMES COLEMAN,
OLIVER MASON,
ANDREW JOHNSON,
ISAAC D. JOHNSON.

At the next stated Church meeting after this visit from the Church committee, I was excommunicated. I did not attend this meeting, but some of my friends attended, and furnished me with the following account of the proceedings of the Church.†

LUDLOW, February 11, 1832.

Minutes of the proceedings of the Baptist Church in Ludlow, relative to the excommunication of Zechariah Parker, Jun.

Three charges against Mr Parker were presented to the Church, in substance as follows:

1. He has accused the Church of very unchristian conduct in the excommunication of Mr James Coleman.
2. He has withdrawn himself from the fellowship of the Church.
3. He has reproached the Church.

These charges were not proved, but said to be founded on a certain letter which Mr Parker had written to the Church, but which was not exhibited. The report of a committee, which

*This quotation of Mr W. cannot be found in the Bible. If he ever finds any scripture in favor of close communion, he will perhaps find his quotation in connection with it.

† Some of the members of the Church were not a little irritated, because some Anti-Baptist attended a public Church meeting without Church license.

had been appointed to confer with Mr Parker was then read. This committee consisted of Dea. Wilcox, Ephraim Warren, senior, and Solomon Haven. They stated that they had attended to the business of their appointment; that Mr Parker was very obstinate, and gave them no christian satisfaction. Mr Spaulding interrogated Mr Haven as follows: "Did Mr Parker appear to have the love of God in his soul? Did he converse like a Christian?" Mr Haven answered these questions in the negative, and added, that Mr Parker talked so fast that they (the committee) had no opportunity to say much to him.

Mr James Haven, senior, rose and made some very vague and unintelligible remarks. Mr Withington said, that Mr Parker had told him, that he came into the Church of his own accord, and had a right to go out of it whenever he pleased. Elder Hurlbut remarked, "If Mr Parker has a right to come into, and go out of the Church whenever he pleases, we may at least shut the door after him."* This taunting remark caused a general laughter among the members of the Church. Mr James Haven, senior, made a motion to have Mr Parker excommunicated, but the Elder said that he was a little out of order, as no such motion had been called for. Mr Warren then made a few remarks, after which, the Elder in a lengthy, though impertinent speech, urged the necessity of water baptism, called it the only door into the visible Church, a pre-requisite to the Lord's supper, and

* In reference to this ill-timed remark, I would seriously ask, Was it not virtually saying, *let us excommunicate Mr Parker?* Was it not designed to excite laughter? Ought laughter to be mingled with the solemnity of excluding members from the *house of Christ*? Have the members of the Baptist Church in Ludlow, so soon forgot the solemn declaration of Ruel Lothrop, viz. "*Those members who are excluded from the Baptist Church, whether guilty or not guilty of the charges preferred against them, will most certainly be damned.*" It is perhaps worthy of remark, that this absurd and blasphemous declaration was believed by some of his deluded proselytes. Just before the close of this Church meeting, Mr James Haven, senior, rose and vouched for the rectitude of the Elder's character, which some had the presumption to call in question. Mr H. appears too enthusiastic to be permitted to trumpet the Elder's clerical fame at his own discretion. He said, that the Elder's character might be fully known, by going a circle of 130 miles. The Elder not long since, in one of his lectures (by way of self commendation,) said, that he had preached the Gospel in no less than five States of the Union. When Mr H. is able to travel into five States by going a circuitous route of 130 miles only, he will be able to prove, that baptism by immersion is the only door into the visible Church.

At this laughing Church meeting, Mr James Coleman was excommunicated, notwithstanding he had been excommunicated several months before. He was first excommunicated in August, 1831. His letter of excommunication is dated February 4th, 1832, and he was again excommunicated on the 11th of the same month. As the Church has private meetings for the the "transaction of public business," I know not how many times he has since been excommunicated, nor can I learn how many times the Elder's new system of Church government requires that a member should be excommunicated. This excommunication *extra*, was probably to exhibit the *pious* indignation of the Church. The burning of Judas in effigy, constitutes a part of the religious worship of the Roman Catholics of Spain; and the re-excommunication of the *too charitable*, may yet form a part of the Baptist ritual.

concluded, by saying that Mr Parker had violated the Gospel rules. Mr Haven made a second motion to have Mr Parker excommunicated, and he was then excommunicated by an unanimous vote.

THOMAS FRENCH,
A. S. BARTON.

LETTER OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

"To Brother Zechariah Parker, Jr.

"DEAR BROTHER,—It is some years since you united with this Church of Christ, at which time you engaged to walk with it, and be governed by its rules, and the laws of Christ's house, and seek its interest. But for a length of time past, you have absented yourself from our communion, and neglected our conferences and stated Church meetings, and have stated, that the Church acted very unchristianlike in their labor with, and exclusion of Mr James Coleman, and have spoken reproachfully of the Church, and have also, virtually withdrawn your fellowship from us. And now, dear brother, according to the order of Christ's house, it has become our painful duty, and we do hereby, in consequence of your obstinately persisting in, and pursuing the course above mentioned, withdraw our hand of Church fellowship from you; and we do pray our Heavenly Father, to regard you in mercy, and restore you to that state of spiritual feeling and enjoyment that you manifested when you united with us; and that he would restore you to his grace and spiritual favor. In behalf of the Baptist Church in Ludlow.

"JESSE BAILEY, Chh. Clerk."

"Ludlow, February 23, 1832.

1. In the preceding letter, the Church say, that I "engaged to be governed by its rules, and the laws of Christ's house." I never subscribed to the Baptist articles of faith, nor agreed to be governed by the Church. As the Baptists have no uniform and settled rules for the government of their Churches, I therefore refused to subscribe to Church rules, which might be altered without my consent.*

At the time I united with the Church, I engaged to be governed by the letter of the Gospel, or the laws of Christ's house. I would ask, what are the laws of Christ's house but those rules which he has given for the government of the Church? Who has authorized Elder H. to enact laws for Christ's house? Has he been the Lord's counsellor? The phrase, *Christ's house*, as here used, plainly implies what some religious fanatics assert, viz. "That no other but Baptist Churches, belong to Christ's house."

* The infamous Ruel Lothrop made some very material alterations in the Baptist articles of faith. His worshipers supposed he had a right to make such alterations in their creed, as he thought proper.

2. I am charged with "absenting myself from the communion of the Church." It is true, I did not commune with the Church for several months, because some of the members refused to commune with me. Was this a crime? I would very civilly ask the Elder if it was a crime in him not to break bread to a certain Church, (when a Mason,) because some of its members refused to receive it from his hands?

3. I am also accused of "stating that the Church acted very unchristianlike in its labor with, and expulsion of Mr James Coleman." This accusation is false. I stated in my letter to the Church, that I *considered* the measures adopted in the excommunication of Mr Coleman, as arbitrary and unchristian. Now the question which the Church should have decided is, Has a member of Elder Hurlbut's Church a right to *consider*, or *believe* that unscriptural measures are unchristian measures and communicate the same to the Church?

4. I am accused of "speaking reproachfully of the Church." If no Church under the jurisdiction of the Elder can err, I may have reproached the Church; but if the Church has erred, it is no reproach to say it has erred. It is hoped that the Elder will yet learn the wide distinction between a simple averment of facts and *reproaches*.—According to his Gospel criticism, Christ reproached the Jews, by saying, "ye have killed the prophets," &c.

Under the Romish ecclesiastical government, those who question the infallibility of the Pope, are charged with heresy, and punished according to his will and pleasure; but in this land of civil and religious liberty, a person may question the infallibility of the clergy, without fear of the rack or gibbet. The Elder had better proclaim himself infallible, or confess his error.

Notwithstanding the *pious* Elder's spiritual "*discernation*," as he calls it, he may have erred. He has lately refused to break bread to what he terms a *going mason*.* But he has since done it. Why this change? Why this

* Mr Ives, a respectable member of the Elder's Church, was indicted on a charge of *Masonry*, by a Church committee, and excluded from the celebration of the Lord's Supper for about one year. As the Elder is indebted to Mr I. and his relatives for a considerable portion of his salary, and as they had expressed a determination to withdraw their support from him, in case he should cause the Church to excommunicate Mr I. he was *graciously* acquitted at "the special instance and request" of the Elder. Was not this a sacrifice of what he calls *principle*, to "filthy lucre?" He has other erroneous principles, which he would do well to exchange for *lucre*.

mask of fallibility? Will he extinguish the brilliant torch of Antimasonry, which has so long illuminated the pale of his Church? Will he vow unto the Lord, and not fulfil his vow? Will he, for the sake of "the loaves and fishes," break bread to a Mason? Will not the blood of Morgan be required at his hands, or his horrid spectre be seen walking upon the Western waters, or rise up against him on the banks of Black river?

A Card to the Committee of the Baptist Church in Ludlow.

DEA. WILCOX.

We, the undersigned, hereby certify, that we were at the house of Zechariah Parker, Jun. on the evening of the 19th of January, 1832—that a committee appointed by the Baptist Church in Ludlow, consisting of Dea. Wilcox, Ephraim Warren, senior, and Solomon Haven, came to visit Mr Parker, and that in the course of their conversation, Mr Parker, addressing Dea. Wilcox, said, "Brother Wilcox, I understand that there was a labor on you when you withdrew from the Congregational Church; if so, you did not do right." Dea. Wilcox replied, "There was no labor on me when I withdrew from the Congregational Church, but they took up a labor with me soon after, as we have with you, but they had no business to,"* and then added, "a man voluntarily goes into a Church, and voluntarily goes out of a Church."

JAMES COLEMAN,
OLIVER MASON,
HEARTWELL WOOD,
STEPHEN SPAULDING,
ISAAC D. JOHNSON.

Dea. Wilcox against Dea. Wilcox.

We, the undersigned, hereby certify, that on the 22d of February, 1832, we heard the following conversation between Dea. Wilcox and Zechariah Parker, Jun. Mr Parker said, Dea. Wilcox, "I understand that there *was* a labor on you when you withdrew from the Congregational Church; if so, you did not do right. You stated when at my house, that there was no labor on you when you withdrew from the Congregational Church, but that they took up a labor with you soon after, the same as the one which is taken up with me, but they had no business to, and that a man voluntarily goes into a Church, and voluntarily goes out of a Church." Dea. Wilcox then denied

* Who, but Dea. Wilcox, is so narrow-sighted as to suppose, if the Congregational Church had no right to take up a labor with him after he had withdrawn from it, that the Baptist Church had a right to take up a labor with Mr Parker after he had withdrawn from it?

that he ever made the above statement, as repeated by Mr Parker.

JONAS DUNN,
ELIAS SARGENT,
THOMAS FRENCH.

Will the Dea. admit that he has been weighed in the balance of *truth*, and found wanting, or will he have the ingenuity to reconcile his statements? I would here remark, that the Dea. formerly belonged to the Congregational Church. He charged Dea. W*****, a member of the same Church, with perjury. The charge, proving false and malicious, he immediately withdrew from the Church, instead of confessing his error. Notwithstanding he had calumniated Dea. W. he was received by the Baptists with much enthusiasm, and created Deacon.* I would ask the Deacon whether it was an examination of the scriptures, or his attempt to defame Dea. W. that induced him to change his opinion with respect to baptism and Christian communion? If he replies to this work, it is hoped that he will state his reasons for changing his religion.

EPHRAIM WARREN, SENIOR.

We, the undersigned, hereby certify, that on the evening of the 19th Jan. 1832, Deacon Wilcox and Ephraim Warren, senior, stated to Zechariah Parker, Jun, that they were chosen to make, and did make, the following charges against Mr James Coleman, viz.

1. For withdrawing from the Church on account of close communion.

2. For leaving the Church.

HEARTWELL WOOD,
STEPHEN SPAULDING,
JAMES COLEMAN,
OLIVER MASON,
ANDREW JOHNSON,
ISAAC D. JOHNSON.

Ephraim Warren against himself.

Extract of a letter from Capt. Morey:

"THETFORD, April, 1832.

"MR PARKER—Sir: I received a line from you, requesting me to state what Mr Ephraim Warren, senior, said in my hearing respecting a Church committee chosen to wait on Mr Coleman. Mr Warren stated that he was one of the committee chosen to confer with Mr Coleman, and find where he stood—that they

* This Church promotion is a mark of respect, for deserting the Congregational Church. In this, the Baptists have tacitly said, that a Congregational slanderer is good enough for a Baptist Deacon.

(the committee) were not chosen to prefer any allegations, and did not prefer any allegations against him.

"ALANSON MOREY."

I would remark, that Mr Eaton, a man of truth and respectability, and a member of Elder Hurlbut's Church, will confirm the statement of Capt. Morey.

Solomon Haven against the Truth.

It has been before stated by several witnesses of unquestionable veracity, that Mr Haven accused me of using the most profane language in the hearing of Mr Robertson, and stated at the same time, that Mr Robertson informed him of it.

Letter from Mr Robertson.

"I understand that Mr Solomon Haven of Ludlow, has reported that I stated that Zechariah Parker, Jun. of Ludlow, made use of profane language in my hearing, which statement of said Haven, if so made, is false, as I never made such statement, neither did I ever hear Mr Parker swear or make use of profane language.

JOHN ROBERTSON.

"Rockingham, April 6, 1832."

Again. We, the undersigned, hereby certify, that on the 25th of February inst. we heard Solomon Haven state, that Mrs Bates told him that Zechariah Parker, Jun. told her, that when he (Mr Parker) was out of the Church, he would destroy it. Mr Parker denied that he ever told Mrs Bates so, and said that she would deny that he ever told her so, or that she ever told him (Mr Haven) so. We also say, that Mrs Bates says that she never heard Mr Parker say, that when he was out of the Church he would destroy it, nor any thing to that effect.—Mr Haven then said that Mrs Bates never told him so.

THOMAS FRENCH.

Ludlow, Feb. 27, 1832.

STEPHEN SPAULDING.

Will this little *Ananias* of the Church say that he never told an untruth? To avoid the just imputation of *Church slander*, I would remark that this Church committee is not a fair sample of the Church. As a proof of my respect for the Church, I would recommend that this committee be discharged, and another committee appointed and instructed to inquire into the expediency of their contradictory statements. If the members of the Church are not over-willing to bear each other's burdens, they will call on this committee for an explanation.

Remarks on Baptism.

1. We have no positive proof that John the Baptist, or the Apostles, baptized by immersion.

The word *baptism*,* does not always imply the application of water. The reception of the Holy Ghost is called a baptism. John the Baptist, in speaking of this baptism, says, "*And he (Christ) shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*" Christ, in a plain allusion to his crucifixion, says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, but how am I straitened till it be accomplished."

2. Water baptism was not always administered by immersion.

The Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea. Moses says they went through the sea on dry ground. Baptism by immersion cannot be administered to a person while walking on dry ground; therefore, the Israelites were not baptized by immersion. A person may be sprinkled from a cloud while walking on dry ground; therefore, it is evident, that the Israelites were baptized by sprinkling.† As this mode of baptism was administered by God himself, we are, therefore, authorized to baptize by sprinkling.

3. Such were the various circumstances under which the Apostles baptized, as to contradict the supposition that they always baptized by immersion.

The supposition, that about 3,000 persons were baptized by immersion on the day of Pentecost, cannot be admitted. It was 9 o'clock before Peter commenced his sermon, after which "with many words, he testified and exhorted;" therefore, a part of the day only, was devoted to the administration of baptism. It is very absurd to suppose that in about half a day, the 12 Apostles could have received 3000 distinct confessions of faith, and then have baptized the same number of persons by immersion.‡ We cannot suppose that they were assisted by the 70 disciples, because they do not appear to have been authorized to baptize.

It cannot be supposed that the Jailer and his family were baptized by immersion. They were baptized in the night, and in a prison. That they were baptized in a prison, is evident, because the Apostles refused to leave it until brought out by the magistrates, by whose authority they had been imprisoned. We cannot admit the probability, that baptism by immersion was administered within the walls of a Jewish prison.

4. There appears to have been no circumstances under which the Apostles baptized, which contradicted the supposition, that they were baptized by sprink-

* The Greek word *baptizo*, is rendered in Latin *mergo, lavo*. *Mergo* is rendered in English, to put under water, to sink, to dip, to immerse, to overwhelm.—*Lavo* is rendered, to wash, to rinse, to bathe, to besprinkle. Hence, the particular mode of baptism practised by the primitive Christians cannot be determined by the word *baptizo*.

† The circumstance of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea, has no more resemblance to a person's being baptized by immersion, than the act of going into the dry hold of a ship upon the water has.

‡ To obviate this objection, the author of a little, patty dialogue on baptism and close communion, says, "A Baptist minister lately baptized 27 persons in 9 minutes." Was this baptismal feat performed on a wager, or only to exhibit his agility in water? This *Leviathan* will doubtless exclaim, "I have admitted more persons into the visible Church in 9 minutes, than St Paul did, during his whole life-time." What a glorious triumph! Tell it in Gath, and proclaim it in the ears of every pedobaptist.

ling or affusion. Baptism by sprinkling, or affusion, might have been administered where there was not a sufficient quantity of water to baptize by immersion; but baptism by immersion could not have been administered where the means of baptizing by sprinkling or affusion did not exist; therefore, the weight of circumstantial evidence (and which is all the evidence we have in relation to the original mode of Christian baptism) is in favor of the supposition that the Apostles baptized by sprinkling or affusion. The circumstance of Philip and the Eunuch's going down *into*, and coming up *out* of the water, is often referred to, as a proof that the Eunuch was baptized by immersion.—Admitting that they both went *into* the water, and that the Eunuch was baptized in the water, it does not prove that he was baptized by immersion. It is generally, if not universally acknowledged by those acquainted with the Greek text, that it might have been properly rendered as follows, viz. And Philip and the Eunuch went down *to*, and came up *from*, the water. It is said, that Christ went up *into* a mountain and was there overshadowed by a cloud, &c. Now this affords as much proof that he went below the surface of the earth, and was there overshadowed by a cloud, as we have that Philip and the Eunuch even went *into* the water.

5. Romans vi. 4. is thought by some to prove that the primitive Christians were baptized by immersion. The apostle says "we are buried with him (Christ) by baptism into death." This language is figurative. It will not admit of a literal meaning, hence, it has no allusion to water baptism. The Apostle says, "we are buried with him," &c. Now if we say that he alluded to water baptism, we charge him with the use of improper language. The phrase "*we are buried*," is not the only objection which arises by giving this scripture a literal meaning. The phrase *baptized into death*, literally imports that they died in consequence of being baptized with water; but none of the primitive Christians died or were put to death because they had been baptized with water. Baptism *into death*, as here used, cannot mean, that the *death of sin* was effected by water baptism, because the Apostle says in the preceding verse, *we were baptized into Christ's death*. Christ was not baptized with water into the death of sin because he never sinned; therefore, the baptism he alluded to is not water baptism.

6. No unprejudiced person can believe that baptism by immersion is the only door into the visible Church, or a saving ordinance. This religious dogma was borrowed of the Romish Church, and incorporated into the Baptist articles of faith for the purpose of forming a party religion. It is a fact which cannot be denied, that the Baptist clergy have made the door into their Church narrower than Christ has made the gate of Heaven. They say that the Christian believer must be baptized by immersion or he cannot be saved. Christ said to the penitent thief, *this day thou shalt be with me in paradise*. They certainly contradict the express word of Christ, unless they can prove that the thief was taken from the cross, and baptized by immersion.

7. John the Baptist, baptized unto repentance; those who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, were baptized for the remission of sins; therefore, the unregenerate were baptized. Now if baptism is the only door into the visible Church, unregenerate persons were admitted into the visible Church.

8. If baptism by immersion is a saving ordinance, then all who are baptized by immersion will be saved.

9. It is contended by the Baptists, that the twelve Apostles were baptized by John, before they were chosen by Christ. It follows then, that *Judas* was baptized with water, and if water baptism is a saving ordinance, Christ did not lose the *son of perdition*, as he declared.

10. If St Paul considered water baptism a saving ordinance, why did he thank God that he had baptized so few?

11. If the *mode* of baptism is essential to our salvation, why did not Christ designate that mode by which it should be administered?

12. As the original mode of Christian baptism is uncertain, it is, therefore, immaterial.

13. Had we positive proof that Christ was baptized by immersion, we should be no more bound to imitate his example in this respect than we are bound to kneel when at prayer, because he knelt. I challenge the Baptist clergy to prove that any particular mode of baptism is more essential to our salvation, than the attitude of the body when at prayer.* The candidate for the ordinance of baptism has a right to be baptized by that mode which he shall choose, and no charitable minister of the Gospel, will deny him this right.

* The Baptist champion in Connecticut, to whose *dialogue* I have before alluded, says, "The Jews, on a certain occasion, were commanded to sacrifice a red heifer. Now baptism by immersion is as essential, as the redness of the heifer," &c. He must admit, that before this command was given, the *color* of those heifers which the Jews sacrificed, was *immaterial*. None but those whose minds are warped by prejudice, will say that the simple command, to sacrifice a heifer, and to baptize, imply, either *color* or *mode*. Had the Jews been as bigoted as some of the Baptist clergy; some *Korah* among them would have contended that the command, to sacrifice a heifer, had respect to color. Until we are expressly commanded to baptize by immersion, by higher authority than a council of Baptist ministers, the particular mode of baptism seems immaterial. This "*red heifer argument*" only proves the ignorance, bigotry, and superstition of the notable author, whose little *dialogue* is as great an imposition on the public as the wooden nutmegs of his native State.

Remarks on Close Communion.

1. Two Mahometans meet and accost each other with brotherly affection; if the one begins to wash, or baptize at the end of the fingers, and the other at the elbow, they become mortal enemies. Two Christians repair to the house of religious worship, they unite in prayer; they approach the Lord's table, and are about to receive the consecrated bread and wine: if the one says that he was baptized by sprinkling or affusion, the other indignantly exclaims, Your mode of baptism is *high-handed blasphemy*—you have too much religious charity, and are unworthy of the crumbs which fall from our table. If he is not dragged out of the Church, as St. Paul was out of the temple at Jerusalem, he is commanded to *depart*, and is as sternly denied the bread and wine, as the uncircumcised were the shew-bread.

2. Some of the Baptist clergy say, "God is merciful, he will therefore punish to all eternity, those who may err with respect to the mode of baptism."

Ruel Lothrop, who promised eternal salvation to as many as should be baptized by immersion, made the following declaration, viz. "*All those who are not baptized by immersion in this liquid stream, (meaning Black river in Ludlow,) will be immersed in a lake of fire and brimstone.*"* De-

* Mahomet says, all those who do not perform a pilgrimage to Mecca, will be damned. The religion propagated by Mahomet and by Lothrop, cannot be obtained "without money and without price." Had Lothrop been as successful as

clarations like these are frequently made by the Baptist clergy in times of religious excitement, for the express purpose of proselyting. None but those who inveigh against a *common sense religion*, can suppose that God will punish those who may err with respect to the original mode of Christian baptism.

3. If a Baptist is challenged to produce scripture authority in favor of close communion, he repeats a part of the 6th verse of the last chapter to the Thessalonians, viz. "Withdraw yourself from every brother that walks disorderly." He might as well say, "And Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness." This disorderly walk, of which the Apostle speaks, he says, is baptism by sprinkling or affusion. In the 11th verse of the chapter, the Apostle says, "For we hear that there are some among you which walk disorderly, not working at all." The Apostle plainly says that the disorderly walk is idleness.

We cannot suppose that a diversity of opinion, with respect to the mode of baptism, existed in the Apostolic age.

4. The Baptists contend that baptism by immersion is the only door into the visible Church. Methodists are baptized by immersion; therefore, according to the Baptist creed, they belong to the visible Church. Notwithstanding this, they exclude them from their communion. They charge them with a disorderly walk, and the disorderly walk, they say, consists merely in the belief that "when a righteous man turneth from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, his former righteousness shall not be remembered." If this belief is erroneous, it can never produce an error in practice; therefore, it is a harmless belief. To accuse the Methodist of a disorderly walk, is virtually admitting that the Christian believer may walk disorderly.* Should the Methodists deny this disorderly walk of which they are accused, and affirm that all those who are baptized by immersion are sure of eternal happiness, the Baptists would acquit them of this charge, and invite them to their com-

Mahomet, in the propagation of his religion, the waters of Black river, like the crucifixes and bills of indulgence, would have been exported to foreign nations. Elder H. says, "The dictates of conscience are no better than the dictates of a fiend from the infernal pit," &c. The greatest moralists and logicians, define conscience "an original power of the mind, or moral faculty, by which we have the perception of right and wrong in human conduct." Pope very justly remarks,

"What conscience dictates to be done,

"Or warns me not to do,

"This, teach me more than hell to shun,

"That, more than heaven pursue."

If we are to reject the dictates of conscience, by what principle are we to be governed? According to the Elder's system of logic, the Constitution and laws of our State are materially defective, because they guarantee to every person the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience. Should our Council of Censors, consult the religious taste of the Elder, they would perhaps propose the following amendment to our State Constitution, viz. "Whereas, the dictates of conscience, are no better than the instigations of the devil; therefore, no person within the State of Vermont, shall worship God according to the dictates of conscience."

The Elder loudly exclaims against a *common sense religion*. He says, "I don't want a common sense religion." The religion which he advocates is not a common sense religion, and I will do him the justice to say, that he is very sparing of common sense remarks when sermonizing.

* The Baptists say that the Christian believer cannot sin, and that he cannot avoid sinning in every *pious* action; this they say is no contradiction, but good Baptist logic.

munion. Should the Judges of the Courts of Judicature adopt this religious principle, they would say to the criminal, "you are certainly guilty of the crime alledged against you, but if you will plead *not guilty*, you shall be acquitted."

5. The Baptists pretend to follow the example of Christ. Christ communed with Judas. They say Judas was then a devil. Thus they admit that Christ communed with a devil, but they are too righteous in their own estimation, to commune with many genuine Christians. They exclaim, "stand thou by, for we are more holy than thou."

6. At the final judgment, Christ will say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was in prison and ye came unto me." These are the works for which we are to receive eternal happiness. Do the Baptists suppose that Christ will say, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for ye have been baptized by immersion, and have excluded all other Christians from your communion?" The answer is, "No, for the word of God, hence it is the honest opinion of every man. Does it follow, because Elias Hurlbut humbly believes that the primitive Christians were baptized by immersion, that every honest Christian believes so too? Is not this *water* declaration a striking proof of his bigotry and superstition? Will he have the audacity to charge every pedobaptist with dishonesty and hypocrisy? Is the honest opinion of this railing bigot paramount to scripture authority? Will he, in the face of an enlightened public, proclaim himself the standard of true religion? May this blind guide, this pharisaical declaimer, learn to respect a *common sense* religion, and the dictates of conscience. May he renounce his errors, have charity* towards all men, but especially towards the household of faith, and become a sober preacher of the Gospel. May his deluded followers, like the worshipers of *Baal*, learn that "salvation belongs to the Lord," and beware of wolves in sheep's clothing."

* By way of adding a note to a note, I would just remark, that if the Elder reads the 13th chapter of the first epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians, he will undoubtedly condemn the Apostle. In this chapter the Apostle recommends the same spirit of charity which the *pious* Elder is pleased to condemn. Hence, we may not only say, Elias Hurlbut against a *common sense* religion, but also Hurlbut against St Paul. I beg liberty to add, that the Elder appears to be a remarkable instance of the verification of Proverbs, xxvii. 22—"THOUGH THOU SHOULDST BRAY A FOOL IN A MORTAR AMONG WHEAT WITH A PESTLE, YET WILL NOT HIS FOOLISHNESS DEPART FROM HIM."

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